

CORY GARDNER  
4TH DISTRICT, COLORADO

ENERGY AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE  
ENERGY AND POWER SUBCOMMITTEE

COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY SUBCOMMITTEE

OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-0604

May 6, 2014

213 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-4676

7505 VILLAGE SQUARE DRIVE, SUITE #207  
CASTLE ROCK, CO 80108  
(720) 508-3937

2425 35TH AVENUE, SUITE 202  
GREELEY, CO 80634  
(970) 351-6007

408 NORTH MAIN STREET, SUITE F  
P.O. BOX 104  
ROCKY FORD, CO 81067  
(719) 316-1101

529 NORTH ALBANY STREET, SUITE 1220  
YUMA, CO 80759  
(970) 848-2845

The Honorable Thomas Wheeler  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

We commend your efforts to continue modernization of the Universal Service Fund (USF), and we particularly appreciate your willingness to tackle some of the unanswered questions that remain for many of the carriers utilizing the fund. In conjunction with these ongoing efforts, we call on the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to adopt and implement a Connect America Fund (CAF) mechanism for areas served by rural rate-of-return-regulated carriers that is both tailored to the unique circumstances those areas face, and will provide sufficient and predictable support for the upgrade and sustainability of broadband-capable networks in the high-cost areas of the nation.

Today, because USF support is tied to voice service for rural providers under current rules, high-cost areas served by rural carriers may receive reduced support if consumers do not take "plain old telephone service" (POTS) along with broadband. This potentially deters broadband adoption and inhibits technological evolution. This is concerning in light of the already-ongoing technology transition that the FCC is working diligently to expedite and facilitate. While rural carriers have made tremendous progress in deploying advanced networks, these outdated rules represent a real obstacle to the broadband future toward which we are all aiming.

We recognize that USF reform involves many complex issues and difficult trade-offs. We support measures to ensure USF funds are used responsibly and effectively within current budgets while also upholding the statutory mandate that reasonably comparable services must be made available at reasonably comparable prices. While we recognize the FCC is working on a forward looking model for areas served by price cap companies we hope the FCC will work with rate of return companies to create separately designed updates that provide predictable support for the areas they serve as well. Further, we believe that an update to rural carrier support mechanisms can be done at the same time as the work on larger carriers.

For these reasons, we urge the FCC to move forward immediately with adopting and implementing a carefully tailored update of the existing mechanisms that will provide sufficient and predictable support for broadband-capable networks in areas served by rural carriers. We firmly believe that areas served by rural carriers should have the same fundamental choices among reasonably comparable services at reasonably comparable rates that consumers in urban areas enjoy.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Cory Anderson

Steve D.

Scott R. Tipton

Scott R. Tipton

Phil V. Anderson

Tom Cotta

Brett Guthrie

Kurt Schuler

Adam Sisk

Blake Farnsworth

Jackie Walorski

Van Benschoten

Pete P. Hallego

Ch. Stewart

Fish Vela

Doug La Malfa



J Young

A. Lange Giff

J. P. R.

Mo Brooke

Lam L.

Del Long (Mo 87)

Mark Shuman

Midland

Ken Cram

Lay Buckner

Wm L E mart

Hyd Fink

Bill Lundy

Tri Cullen

Vicky Hartley

Christi Voem

Andy Born

Rail M. Gignere

Dave Lockback

Bill Johnson

For Barber

Bill U

Rob B

Amil B. M. T. e  
Gynthia P. Lummis

Com. B. m

John Banner

Joe Wilson

Adrian Smith

Rubin Hengosa

Don Young

Robert M. Nolan

Steve Pearce

Sanford A. Boroff

Doug Lamborn

Ann McTane Foster

Peter de Fazio

E. Whitfield

Steve King

J. T. Bitt

Ronnie Lehman

Lee Leroy

Virginia Fox

Blaine Luginbuhl

Mike McIntyre

Hal Rogers

Steve Chaffetz



Dary Collins GA-9

Michael H. Michael

Jeddy Ben

Frank D Lucas

Lamar Smith

John Stumme

Tim Peters

Pat Walker

Wally Anderson

Bob E. J.

Jeff Wynn

Luke Messer

Rep. Phil

CD 4

Ernestine -

K. M. Long

Tim Walling

John S. IL-15

Bob Ely

Tom Sisk

Jim Wansbrough

Les J. Maly

Y. K. W. P. H.

Mac G. W.

Cher R



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Cory Gardner

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Scott Tipton

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Mark Amodei

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Brett Guthrie

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Aaron Schock

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Jackie Walorski

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Pete Gallego

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Filemon Vela

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Steve Daines

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Todd Rokita

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Tom Cotton

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Kurt Schrader

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Blake Farenthold

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Don Benishek

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Chris Stewart

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Doug LaMalfa

Todd Young

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Steve Womack

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Morgan Griffith

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Sean Duffy

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Mo Brooks

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Sam Graves

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Billy Long

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Mark Meadows

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Rick Crawford

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Kevin Cramer

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Larry Buschon

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Bill Enyart

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Stephen Fincher

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Bill Cassidy

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Tim Griffin

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Vicky Hartzler

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Kristi Noem

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Andy Barr

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Raul Grijalva

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Dave Loebsack

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Bill Johnson

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Ron Barber

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David Valadeo

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Rob Bishop

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David McKinley

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Cynthia Lummis

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Corrine Brown

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John Barrow

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Joe Wilson

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Adrian Smith

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Ruben Hinojosa

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Don Young

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Rick Nolan

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Steve Pearce

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Sanford Bishop

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Doug Lamborn

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Ann Kuster

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Peter DeFazio

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Ed Whitfield

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Steve King

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Jason Smith

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Louie Gohmert

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Lee Terry

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Virginia Foxx

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Blake Luetkemeyer

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Mike McIntyre

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Hal Rogers

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Jason Chaffetz

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Doug Collins

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Mike Michaud

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Derek Kilmer

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Frank Lucas

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Lamar Smith

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John Garamendi

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Tom Petri

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Peter Welch

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Alan Nunnelee

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Robert Latta

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Jeff Duncan

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Luke Messer

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Reid Ribble

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Chris Gibson

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Emanuel Cleaver

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K. Michael Conaway

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Tim Walberg

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John Shimkus

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Bruce Braley

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Tom Latham

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Jim Sensenbrenner

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Tim Walz

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Ann Kirkpatrick

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Mac Thornberry

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# Chellie Pingree

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 30, 2014

The Honorable Cory Gardner  
U.S. House of Representatives  
213 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Gardner:

Thank you for your letter supporting the creation of a Connect America mechanism for areas served by rural rate-of-return carriers, and a method to provide support for broadband-only lines. This is one of the key issues that the Commission raised in the Connect America Fund Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that we adopted in April. Your views on this matter are very important, and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

The universal service program is one of the most important tools at our disposal to ensure that consumers and businesses in rural America have the same opportunities as their urban and suburban counterparts to be active participants in the United States of the 21st century. I agree with you that the existing universal service mechanisms for rate-of-return carriers "represent a real obstacle to the broadband future toward which we are all aiming." We are focused on updating the universal service program to ensure that we are delivering the best possible voice and broadband experiences to rural America within the confines of our Connect America budget, while providing increased certainty and predictability for all carriers and a climate for increased broadband expansion.

To that end, in April the Commission voted to move forward with Phase II of the Connect America Fund for price-cap carriers, and took several steps to improve the climate for broadband investment in areas served by incumbent rate-of-return carriers. In particular, we eliminated the Quantile Regression Analysis benchmarks rule because it was not serving its intended purpose. In addition, in the above-mentioned *Further Notice*, the Commission proposed a stand-alone broadband funding mechanism for rate-of-return carriers and sought comment on how to support the deployment of broadband-capable networks by rate-of-return carriers within the current budget for the program. We expect a robust record on how a standalone broadband mechanism could be structured to provide support consistent with the \$2 billion budget for rate-of-return territories.

I appreciate your interest in this matter, and I look forward to working with you as we continue the work of reforming and modernizing the universal service fund high-cost program – as well as other components of the Fund – to ensure that all Americans have access to robust voice and broadband services.

Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 30, 2014

The Honorable Mark Amodei  
U.S. House of Representatives  
222 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Amodei:

Thank you for your letter supporting the creation of a Connect America mechanism for areas served by rural rate-of-return carriers, and a method to provide support for broadband-only lines. This is one of the key issues that the Commission raised in the Connect America Fund Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that we adopted in April. Your views on this matter are very important, and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Tom Wheeler





FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 30, 2014

The Honorable Ron Barber  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1029 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Barber:

Thank you for your letter supporting the creation of a Connect America mechanism for areas served by rural rate-of-return carriers, and a method to provide support for broadband-only lines. This is one of the key issues that the Commission raised in the Connect America Fund Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that we adopted in April. Your views on this matter are very important, and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 30, 2014

The Honorable Andy Barr  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1432 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Barr:

Thank you for your letter supporting the creation of a Connect America mechanism for areas served by rural rate-of-return carriers, and a method to provide support for broadband-only lines. This is one of the key issues that the Commission raised in the Connect America Fund Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that we adopted in April. Your views on this matter are very important, and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Tom Wheeler





FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 30, 2014

The Honorable John Barrow  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2202 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Barrow:

Thank you for your letter supporting the creation of a Connect America mechanism for areas served by rural rate-of-return carriers, and a method to provide support for broadband-only lines. This is one of the key issues that the Commission raised in the Connect America Fund Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that we adopted in April. Your views on this matter are very important, and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 30, 2014

The Honorable Dan Benishek  
U.S. House of Representatives  
514 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Benishek:

Thank you for your letter supporting the creation of a Connect America mechanism for areas served by rural rate-of-return carriers, and a method to provide support for broadband-only lines. This is one of the key issues that the Commission raised in the Connect America Fund Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that we adopted in April. Your views on this matter are very important, and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Tom Wheeler





FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 30, 2014

The Honorable Rob Bishop  
U.S. House of Representatives  
123 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Bishop:

Thank you for your letter supporting the creation of a Connect America mechanism for areas served by rural rate-of-return carriers, and a method to provide support for broadband-only lines. This is one of the key issues that the Commission raised in the Connect America Fund Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that we adopted in April. Your views on this matter are very important, and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 30, 2014

The Honorable Sanford Bishop  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2429 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Bishop:

Thank you for your letter supporting the creation of a Connect America mechanism for areas served by rural rate-of-return carriers, and a method to provide support for broadband-only lines. This is one of the key issues that the Commission raised in the Connect America Fund Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that we adopted in April. Your views on this matter are very important, and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Tom Wheeler





FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 30, 2014

The Honorable Bruce Braley  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2263 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Braley:

Thank you for your letter supporting the creation of a Connect America mechanism for areas served by rural rate-of-return carriers, and a method to provide support for broadband-only lines. This is one of the key issues that the Commission raised in the Connect America Fund Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that we adopted in April. Your views on this matter are very important, and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 30, 2014

The Honorable Mo Brooks  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1230 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Brooks:

Thank you for your letter supporting the creation of a Connect America mechanism for areas served by rural rate-of-return carriers, and a method to provide support for broadband-only lines. This is one of the key issues that the Commission raised in the Connect America Fund Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that we adopted in April. Your views on this matter are very important, and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler".

Tom Wheeler





FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 30, 2014

The Honorable Corrine Brown  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2111 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Brown:

Thank you for your letter supporting the creation of a Connect America mechanism for areas served by rural rate-of-return carriers, and a method to provide support for broadband-only lines. This is one of the key issues that the Commission raised in the Connect America Fund Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that we adopted in April. Your views on this matter are very important, and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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To that end, in April the Commission voted to move forward with Phase II of the Connect America Fund for price-cap carriers, and took several steps to improve the climate for broadband investment in areas served by incumbent rate-of-return carriers. In particular, we eliminated the Quantile Regression Analysis benchmarks rule because it was not serving its intended purpose. In addition, in the above-mentioned *Further Notice*, the Commission proposed a stand-alone broadband funding mechanism for rate-of-return carriers and sought comment on how to support the deployment of broadband-capable networks by rate-of-return carriers within the current budget for the program. We expect a robust record on how a standalone broadband mechanism could be structured to provide support consistent with the \$2 billion budget for rate-of-return territories.

I appreciate your interest in this matter, and I look forward to working with you as we continue the work of reforming and modernizing the universal service fund high-cost program – as well as other components of the Fund – to ensure that all Americans have access to robust voice and broadband services.

Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 30, 2014

The Honorable Larry Bucshon  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1005 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Bucshon:

Thank you for your letter supporting the creation of a Connect America mechanism for areas served by rural rate-of-return carriers, and a method to provide support for broadband-only lines. This is one of the key issues that the Commission raised in the Connect America Fund Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that we adopted in April. Your views on this matter are very important, and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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Sincerely,

Tom Wheeler





FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 30, 2014

The Honorable Bill Cassidy  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1131 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Cassidy:

Thank you for your letter supporting the creation of a Connect America mechanism for areas served by rural rate-of-return carriers, and a method to provide support for broadband-only lines. This is one of the key issues that the Commission raised in the Connect America Fund Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that we adopted in April. Your views on this matter are very important, and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 30, 2014

The Honorable Jason Chaffetz  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2464 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Chaffetz:

Thank you for your letter supporting the creation of a Connect America mechanism for areas served by rural rate-of-return carriers, and a method to provide support for broadband-only lines. This is one of the key issues that the Commission raised in the Connect America Fund Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that we adopted in April. Your views on this matter are very important, and will be included in the record of the proceeding and considered as part of the Commission's review.

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Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler".

Tom Wheeler